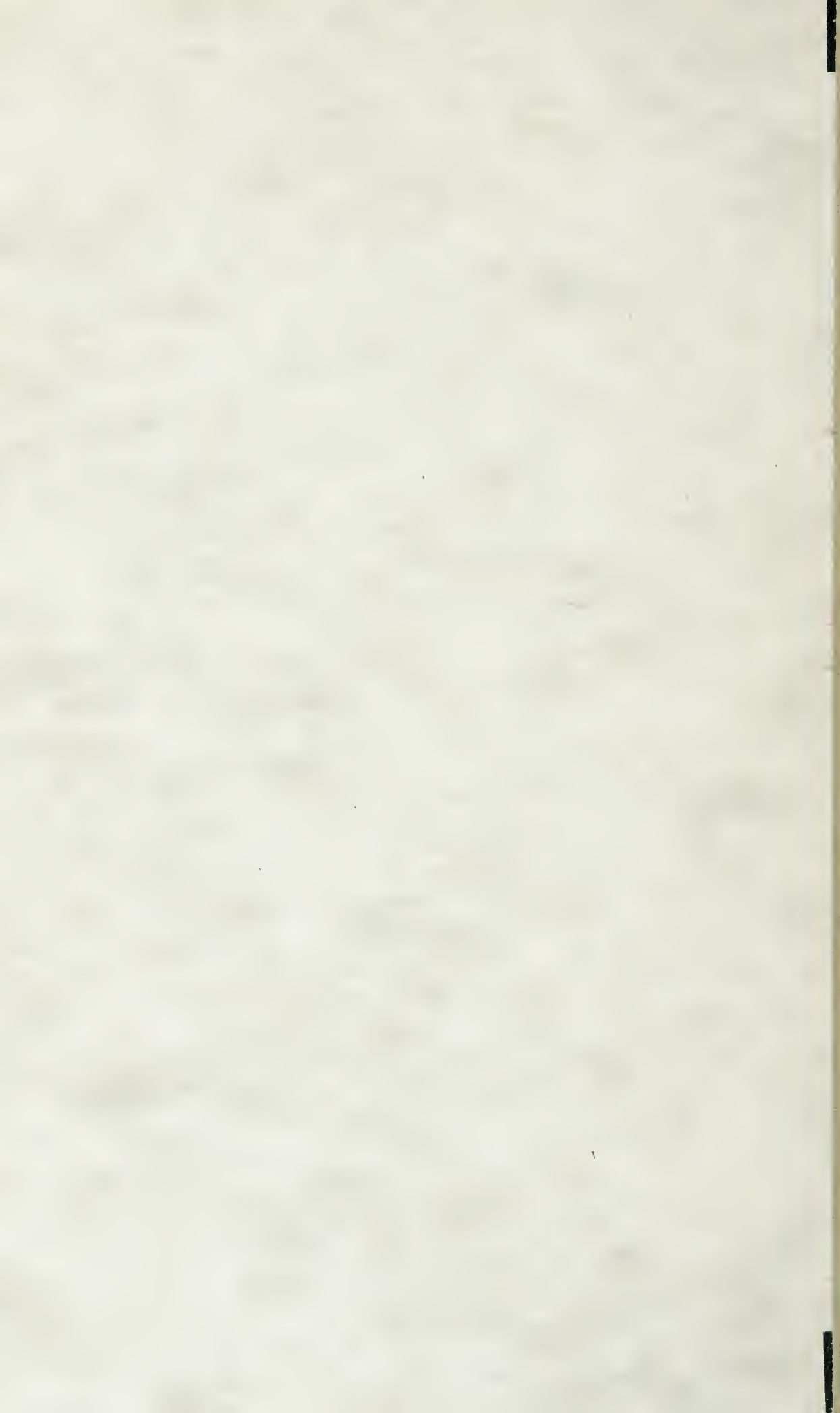


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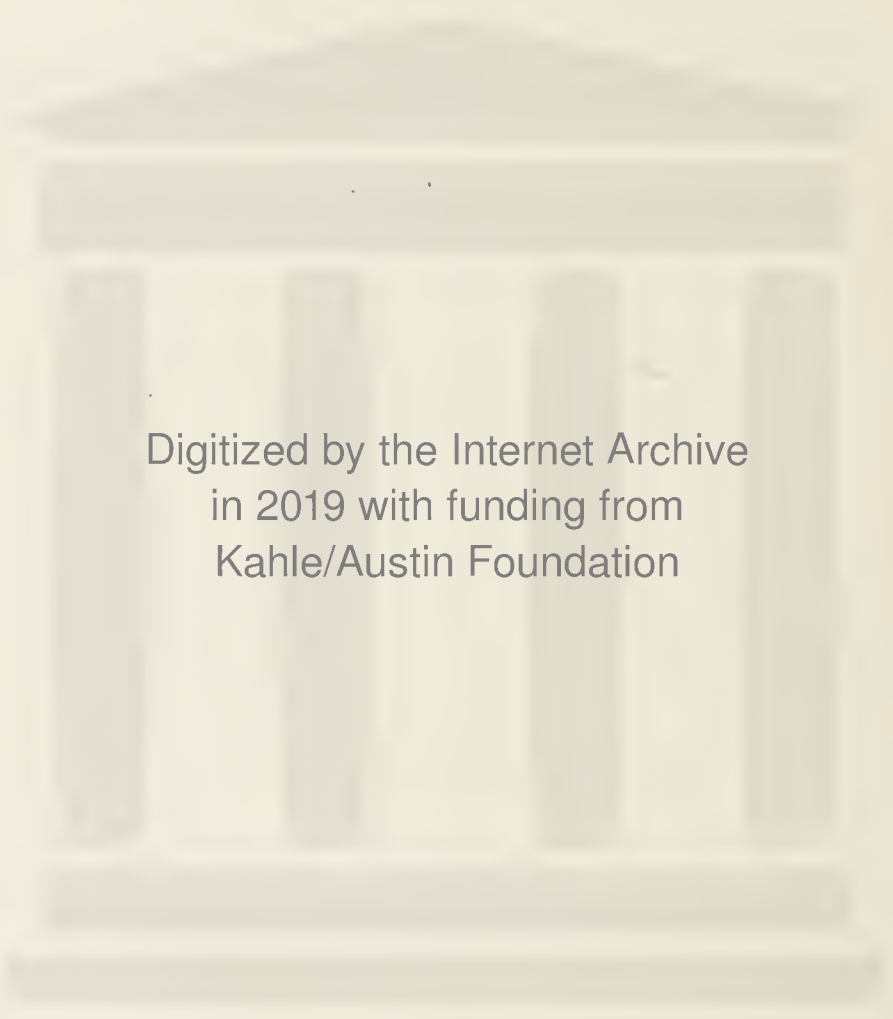
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Canada *and* External Affairs

By Vincent Massey

*An Address delivered before the Toronto Bankers' Educational Association
and reprinted from the Journal of the Canadian Bankers'
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Canada and External Affairs

I APPRECIATE very much the privilege of meeting with the members of the Toronto Bankers' Educational Association to-night. I remember a few years ago, when this organization was being formed, I was a very interested onlooker, and I think you are to be congratulated and, as an Association, you deserve the highest praise, for the tremendous progress which has been made by what has now become an extremely important and invaluable body in this city.

The subject that I was rash enough to venture to talk about to you to-night is, Canada and External Affairs, and I have an uneasy feeling that in Canada the question of foreign affairs is looked upon as an extremely academic topic. In fact, to the average Canadian—and I think it is perhaps quite natural—external affairs seem to have about as close a connection with our every day existence as Einstein's theory of relativity to the price of eggs. And yet I think the connection is not quite so remote as one might imagine.

This attitude of mind that looks upon foreign affairs as academic and rather abstract can be accounted for, because, despite the fact that we are the closest neighbor of what, in a material sense, is the dominant power in the world, and in spite of the fact that we are on the highway between Asia and Europe and nearer to both than any other North American State, we have had to think little about foreign relations because of the sheltered position we have always occupied. In the first place, we lie in the lee of the Monroe Doctrine. We have lived in the lee of the Monroe Doctrine all our lives and, secondly, we enjoy the gratuitous protection of the British Fleet—and it is not to be forgotten that the Monroe Doctrine owes a good deal to the British Fleet too.

But for all our cloistered life, we have learned that an obscure Balkan quarrel can cost us thousands of lives and millions of money, and it would seem that the Great War should have shaken us out of our habitual provincialism, not only through the repercussion of world events in Canada, but also through the personal experience of hundreds of thousands of Canadians overseas. You know, perhaps, the story of the American soldier who was heard to say, after a few weeks in France, "Well, Paris is different from Hoboken, but you realize it more in Paris than you do in Hoboken." It really seemed with our achievements in the War, and after it, that, as we were told in speeches, we had "swung into the full current of the world's life." But, with the crisis over, we relapsed into our traditional indifference to events beyond our shores, and, instead of stemming the full current, we have slipped into a back-water of provincial aloofness. The other day I was counting up the number of days that had been spent on the subject of external affairs in the Canadian House of Commons in the last five years. By "external affairs" I mean everything outside our own internal affairs—trade treaties, the estimates of the Department of External Affairs, Trade Commissioners, in fact everything that is not "our own show." Out of 548 days of the last five sessions, 13½ days were devoted altogether to external affairs. I do not suppose a smaller proportion of time has been spent on foreign business in the legislature of any other country in the world. It tells its own story.

Do foreign affairs present a practical question? I submit that they do. In the first place, we are living in a shrunken world, infinitely more interwoven in its tissue than it was even in 1914. We, as Canadians (and this is a solemn plati-

tude) are directly and intimately concerned with the establishment in the world of a state of international morals, something more stable and equitable than the jungle system which still prevails.

Moreover, a country so little self-contained as we are is peculiarly dependent upon conditions abroad for its commerce and trade. The United States consumes four-fifths of the home-grown product of farm and forest and mine. We can consume one-half of the corresponding product in Canada, but the remainder must find a market in the world at large. Even the United States cannot detach itself, try though it may, from the affairs of Europe; still less are we able to snap our fingers at what goes on abroad, even though some Canadians have been heard to say that the occupation of the Ruhr was no concern of Canada. That folly alone, as we know, through the dislocation of our markets which it caused, has cost us many millions.

Again, under the subject of trade, it is well to remember that the post-war world offers new problems and new complications. Under the sway of extreme nationalism, high tariffs oppose us everywhere, and it will only be through the most careful attention to the international questions involved that our external trade can develop under the new and more difficult conditions.

Fourthly.: The study of external affairs is of practical importance in a very urgent sense. It is patent that something is wrong in our outside relations. They require readjustment. Our standing in the society of nations is but vaguely comprehended. The American persists in looking upon us as constitutionally a British colony with no national status apart from Great Britain, although, on the other hand, he can refer to us, in an official publication, as being "economically and socially a northern extension of the United States." The European, as I learned afresh last summer, looks upon us either as an arctic outpost of Great Britain or as a geographical area not to be distinguished from the United States, and what Canadian goods are sold in that continent—at least in Eastern Europe—must masquerade under the title 'American' in order to secure the best market—a patent but humiliating fact.

However, this will adjust itself in time. What is more important is that, within the British family itself, we are, due to maladjustment, in danger of being regarded quite wrongly of course, as an apathetic, if not reluctant, member. For this there are a number of causes. In the first place, our relative inaction, until recently, as compared with Australia, in the matter of securing British emigration; our non-compliance when asked if we would give assistance at the time of the Turkish crisis; the assertion of our exclusive right to sign the famous Halibut Treaty; our hesitation over the ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne; our protest on the occasion of the London Conference last summer. In addition to these, there is the curious circumstance of our having been used as a model for the Irish Free State in its relations to the Mother country, from which it follows that Dublin, an uneasy partner in the Commonwealth, is interested in placing a construction on Canada's attitude suitable to her own purposes, and thus attempts to give to this country, in imperial affairs, an unworthy leadership. (You will remember, the other day, that the Irish Government expressed surprise that Canada had not yet publicly supported her extraordinary claim to register the Anglo-Irish agreement in the League of Nations as a treaty between two separate states.)

A Canadian can become rather restless under the charges of disaffection which the New Zealander, for instance, is wont to make. It is easy to show that we in Canada are the most disinterested partners in the British Empire. We are less dependent on Great Britain in the matter of defence and have less to gain from her in commercial protection than any other Dominion. Again, our nationalistic attitude through the generations has been constructive more or less in

direct proportion to the vigour of its expression. but it must be admitted that, now and then, there has been a note of shrillness in our approaches to the Mother Country.

Apart from vague generalizations which like most statements of the kind are wrong, there is the great danger that a succession of incidents, such as have happened recently, might prove a fatal shock to the conception of a united Empire, and despite all that has been said and done and written, we have, apparently, the imperial problem still before us as yet unsolved. That there should be an imperial question awaiting solution is of course not in itself alarming. There has always been a problem of Empire since Sir Walter Raleigh founded the first colony in Virginia, and it has been the periodic solution of these problems, in one way or another, which has meant the organic growth of the British Empire and the continuance of one of the world's greatest experiments in government.

The recent development of the Empire, as we have it to-day, can probably be said to break into two phases, the first being concerned with the assumptions by the Dominions, of the control of their internal affairs. This issue, as everyone knows, was settled in the 19th century and on Canadian soil. The second phase is concerned with the successful effort of the Dominions to secure full autonomy in external affairs, and here again the protagonist on the Dominions' side has been Canada.

The reconciliation of Dominion self-government with the conception of the unity of the Empire is one of the most baffling questions which the student of politics has had to face. Probably the most consistent effort to solve it was that made by the Imperial Federationists. Their idea of a super-parliament of Empire sharing the functions of government with the component parts, whatever may be thought of its desirability, was an impracticable dream, but like all dreams it served the purpose of stimulating an interest in a common British idea operating in the world, and British unity, although it will never take the form which the Imperial Federationists conceived, so long as it lasts, will be in their debt.

The Imperial Federation idea was revived, just before the war, in a form with which many of us are familiar—by the "Round Table Group." Conscious of the failure of earlier experiments and haunted by the fear of a war with Germany, this group came to the conclusion that the British Empire would break into its constituent parts were it not united in a federal system with a Supreme Council established for the control of foreign policy, the British dependencies and the defence of the whole. Those of you who have read the writings of this school will remember how they present one with a dilemma between two conflicting loyalties which confronts, let us say, the Canadian. "What are you going to do," we are asked, "when, in a crisis, you are forced to choose between loyalty to the Empire or loyalty to the smaller unit in which you live?" We are driven, we are told in one able presentation of the case, by an "inexorable chain of logic" to the conclusion that, in the British Commonwealth, you cannot serve two masters, and, as between the two citizenships, that the larger must prevail. It may sound unorthodox to say so, but in the modern state you must be under obligation to several masters whom you serve quite simply. And you can even serve both a national and an imperial master so long as you assume that they will not be in conflict. But you must assume this, for if they are in conflict all the imperial constitutions in the world will not save the Canadian or Australian from choosing which he will follow. As I shall try to show, our efforts are most profitably directed to the task of preventing them from coming into conflict.

Imperial federation in any of its forms can now be said to be as dead as the Dodo. One can even describe the Dodo graphically as being as dead as imperial federation. It was logical, workmanlike and, on paper, most convincing, but pure logic in politics is misleading and also un-British (as the Frenchman does not

refrain from pointing out) and constitution-making in the sphere of the British Empire, at least, should, I think, be left as a harmless form of mental exercise for amateur lawyers.

But it is not only the federationists who have been over-legal in the matter of imperial relationship. A most interesting book written from the opposite angle, by an Australian, Mr. Duncan Hall, to my mind makes a similar error. Mr. Hall points out that although the Dominions have won equal status, they are still technically under disabilities in theory. In other words, *constitutional right* is in conflict with *legal authority*, and Mr. Hall sets great store by the necessity of a solemn declaration declaring, in theory, what already exists in fact. Canada provides us with a good example.: Under the British North America Act we have not the legal power to alter our own constitution. Some regard this as a disability which it is important to remove. They would no doubt agree with Mr. Hall's contention. But is this a matter of first importance? We have virtually as complete a right to alter our own constitution as if we were a sovereign state. No British parliament would refuse to act on an address from the Parliament of Canada making such a request. Here is an analogy.: The crown still has the *legal authority* to veto federal legislation in both Imperial and Dominion houses, but centuries ago lost the *constitutional right* to do so. The British constitution is full of these anomalies. The British mind is deeply concerned with reality and supremely indifferent to externals. In the 17th century, the British public went so far as to execute a sovereign and there has never been much genuine doubt as to the political necessity for this act. Nevertheless, Charles the First's statue in Whitehall, every year, on the anniversary of his execution, is the object of a romantic ceremony conducted by the few who belong to the minority who revere his memory, and no one minds. It is another way of saying that the British have a sense of proportion—a sense of humour.

As a matter of fact the constitution is continually making itself as we attend to those urgent things which require attention. In 1917, it was suggested that a conference should be held later for the purpose of re-drafting the constitution of the British Empire. This project was wisely abandoned subsequently. It would have set loose a flood of legalism which might have resulted in something as perfect in theory as the American constitution and as rigid and as brittle. When a debating society or a tennis club is formed, it is always those who have had least practical experience who desire the most elaborate constitution. The legalistic attitude of mind, with its emphasis on mechanism—on the letter rather than the spirit—has no helpful bearing on the Imperial question. It must be solved differently.

There are, I suppose, three schools of thought in Canada on the subject of foreign affairs, or to be more accurate, two schools of thought and one given to mental inertia. In the first place, there are persons with the "colonial mind", those, fewer now than before the war, who still regard the Empire as being in conflict with Dominion nationality, who sentimentalize over the one to the disparagement of the other. They give us not sentiment, which is a good thing, but sentimentality, which is not.

Then there are the "continentalists," men who believe that in North American life there is something inherently superior to the European, that the Almighty has established a larger reservoir of virtue for this continent, to preserve which we should keep entirely detached from Europe—"the plague spot of the world." They believe, too, that it is more profitable. I came across a letter in a Toronto paper, on the occasion of the Chanak incident, which represents this point of view. May I quote a sentence.: "It is time to decide, once for all, that, hereafter, European nations shall be left to settle their own quarrels and that America, all America, shall attend strictly to business at home."

Then, thirdly, there are those of us whom, for lack of a better term, I shall call the "ostriches" who, metaphorically speaking, keep their heads in the sand and think by so doing they will avoid a knowledge of what is going on in the world and so escape all worry over the matter. Someone must attend to these things, but they are content to "let George do it." (George in this case presumably meaning George V). This is the prevailing attitude of indifference to the issues of external affairs of which most of us are guilty. They seem too remote from us to attract attention. It is significant that, as yet, there is practically no Canadian opinion on the subject of the League of Nations draft Protocol, although this instrument, if ratified, would bind us irrevocably to use military force against any state declared an aggressor by a body in which we have one vote among more than fifty.

This attitude of negation is, of course, inconsistent with the status which we achieved in 1919, and its persistence will not only threaten imperial unity but will be injurious to our own nationality as I shall try to show.

May I briefly sketch what has happened to change our status in the five years since the Peace of 1919. At the Peace Conference, you will remember, the question which pressed itself on the British delegates was how to reconcile the standing which the Dominions had morally won in the war with a unified representation of the British Empire, a seemingly impossible task. And it was chiefly due to Sir Robert Borden's insistence, at times almost vehement, that the plan (for which he was largely responsible) was adopted which will give him a place as one of the great architects of the imperial structure. The scheme, with which you are no doubt familiar, gave the Dominions direct representation as members of the Peace Conference and signatories to the Peace Treaty, and also individual membership in the League of Nations, and, at the same time, gave their representatives at the Conference a place on the panel which represented the Empire as a whole. The panel system gave the Dominions both a status of their own and the right to participate in a collective representation of the Empire. In other words, they were able to eat their cake and have it too. It is no wonder that the Americans were dismayed, and the continental mind mystified, at this strange form of dual representation. An old-fashioned diplomat could hardly have faced it without risk of apoplexy. The anomaly is heightened when one remembers that Great Britain itself was left with no direct representative on the League of Nations.

At the Washington Conference of 1921 the same method of representation was maintained, and Dominion representatives took as full a share at that Conference as at the Peace Conference two years before. But despite the rhetoric with which the new standing of the Dominion was announced and melodramatic references to their "charter of freedom," by Mr. Lloyd George and others, as it now appears, in the long series of conferences which attempted, with cumulative futility, to solve the European problem, this plan of Dominion representation was abandoned and Great Britain again acted for the Empire as she had in pre-war times, with no representatives from the Dominions assisting. It is probably not fair to blame the British Government entirely for this lapse into the old imperial relationship. The Dominions were content to leave these matters to Great Britain and to concentrate on their own important tasks of reconstruction. But the fact remains that during the crucial years—1922-1923—the Dominions, by reason of their absence from the European conferences during this time, (tire-some and ineffective though they may have seemed), and because of the fact that no special representation was made in London, got increasingly out of touch with the problems with which they were intimately related, and to the solution of which they were more or less committed by the events of 1919.

Two events took place which expose the very warp and woof of the imperial fabric, and both, I think, reveal the same defect in that well-worn textile. The first of these revolves round the melodramatic message issued by the British Prime Minister, in September, 1922, asking whether the Dominions would actively support Great Britain in its decision to resist any attempt by the victorious Turkish army of Mustapha Kemal to cross into Europe. The opinion of the Dominions, you will remember, fell into two schools. The Australian and New Zealand Cabinets, possibly because of their greater familiarity with the issues, unhesitatingly replied "Yes." (Australasia had already had the grim experience of the Dardanelles and knew what lay behind the message). But there is also in the answer from Australia the important assumption that in issues so grave as those involved in this controversy, the Empire could speak but with one voice and that from London.

On the other hand, Canada replied that the matter would have to be referred to Parliament, and was later reported in the press to have said, through an official dispatch, that "Canada should not involve herself in British wars unless she was directly interested in them." There is no question, in my mind at least, that, in this assertion, we were constitutionally right. If Dominion autonomy means anything it means that the question of participation in a war must be settled by each Dominion for itself. Our message, in answer to Mr. Churchill's telegram, may have seemed at the moment slightly lukewarm, but there was such an unfortunate atmosphere of political controversy hanging over the British policy in this matter that a certain suspicion of the motives behind the telegram was, possibly, forgivable. But be that as it may, the question is of first importance. The issue of peace and war cannot be settled over the head of a Dominion Government. The Dominion must be the judge of this issue whenever it arises. This was the principle implied in our official reply to the famous message. However, had British interests been in the hands of a less wise person than Sir Charles Harington at Constantinople in 1922, and had war broken out, and had we decided to stay out of the conflict, the British Empire, so far as we were concerned, would have been at an end. If the Empire has any meaning it means that when one of its units is at war the others must be at war also. In the last resort the British Empire must present a united policy if it is to have any effect on the politics of the world. It was doubtless to secure an expression of such a united policy to impress the Turk that the Churchill wire was sent. But, and here is the real crux of the matter, we cannot be asked to endorse a British ultimatum, on the result of which peace or war will ensue, when we are in almost entire ignorance of its background and the issues leading up to it. In other words, unanimity of policy can be obtained in any sincerity only by continuous consultation between the representatives of the units of the Empire, which must take place between these dramatic crises in which a united front is necessary. Can you conceive of any question of sufficient magnitude as to lead to war on which Great Britain and this country—provided we are free to acquire the necessary knowledge and face the inevitable facts and talk the matter over—could not arrive at an agreement? If we cannot find agreement then we have a case of temperamental incompatibility, and that generally leads to divorce as the ultimate course.

The controversy over the Lausanne Treaty (signed in February, 1923), reveals the same problem. The facts are simple. In 1922, the Greco-Turkish war made it necessary to make a new peace between the Allies and the Turks on the best terms obtainable. The draft Treaty of Sèvres, the general lines of which had been laid down formerly by the British Empire Delegation, in which the Dominions were fully represented on the panel system, had to be scrapped. In the arrangements for the new Conference, the British Foreign Secretary, forgetting the whole experience of the war and the earlier peace conferences, and without dis-

Discussing the matter with the Dominions, agreed with France that the Allies should be represented by two delegates each. There is reason to suspect that the French had made a vigorous and successful protest against the inclusion of Dominion delegates in this Conference, and, when this seemed unavoidable, proposed to offset this representation by delegates from their North African dependencies,—a suggestion not flattering to His Majesty's Oversea Dominions! The Lausanne Conference, in any event, made no provision for Dominion representation, and a cabled correspondence ensued between the British Government and the Dominion Governments in which the former showed a complete lack of comprehension of all that had happened since 1914. Canada quite clearly took the line that she would reserve to herself, when the Treaty was drafted, the "right to decide upon the merits of the case what action, on the part of the people of Canada, is right and proper." The British Government in reply pointed out that any treaty resulting from the Lausanne Conference must be binding on the whole Empire when ratified. When, in March, 1924, the Dominions were asked to sign on the dotted line, you will remember, the Canadian Government took the position reflected in the following passage from the official despatch.: "Not having been invited to send representatives to the Lausanne Conference and not having a part in the proceedings of the Conference, either directly or indirectly, and not being for this reason a signatory to the Treaty, on behalf of Canada, my Ministers do not feel that they are in a position to recommend to Parliament approval of the Peace Treaty with Turkey." The Government of the Irish Free State took the same position.

Here again we are presented with the same difficulty as at Chanak. The unity of the Empire was at stake, not this time as regards war, but rather peace. A declaration of neutrality on the part of Canada should war have broken out at Chanak would have been a declaration of independence, a refusal to ratify the Lausanne Treaty would have meant the same thing. Again, the Canadian Government was quite right in raising the objection to ratify a treaty in the drafting of which we, as a nation, had had no share. Our fault was that we had not made a vigorous protest much earlier which would have resulted in our having been given the proper representation at the Conference itself. So, again, the blame must be laid at the door of lack of knowledge, based on absence of communication and interchange of views.

The Treaty, as everyone knows, was ultimately ratified, but not without an inevitable shock to British prestige in Eastern Europe where, above all places, it is necessary that it should be unimpaired.

If we believe in the British Empire sufficiently at least to remain a member of it, we cannot escape the obligation to support its united policy which we, as an independent unit, can help to shape. If we allow the status which we have been accorded to be forgotten on such an occasion as the Lausanne Conference, it is our fault, and it would have been an act of true imperial patriotism to take such action as our Government did in 1919 in securing the Dominion representation at Versailles, and as the present Canadian Government did, last year, in obtaining proper representation at the London Conferences. Lack of knowledge of what goes on should be no excuse for non-compliance. The only reason for non-concurrence in a broader imperial policy would be our final and ultimate disagreement with Great Britain on a large issue after we have taken the opportunity afforded us of making clear our position. Frankly, I do not think that such a final disagreement between the units of the Empire would be possible.

I have pointed out that our representation at international conferences is accepted, and it is only on occasions of absentmindedness or momentary neglect, on the part of Great Britain, the correction of which lies in our own hands, that such representation is not given us. However, this does not solve the problem

of the continual consultation which must take place between the British and the Dominion Governments if we are to have any idea of international issues which at any time may give rise to a crisis. It is a curious anomaly that as between nations within the British family there is far less adequate means of interchange of views than between foreign nations, who are kept in close touch each with the other through the machinery of diplomacy. In our system of communication there is nothing half so effective as the personal contact supplied by ambassadors or ministers supported by their commercial attachés and other experts.

What is the form of communication at present between our own country and Great Britain? Our representation in London is confined to the High Commissioner's office, which was originally conceived largely in terms of a commercial representation, and has always been headed by an officer whose experience and interests and services have been largely connected with business. The work accomplished has been of the highest importance to Canada, and the incumbents of the office have been uniformly men of ability and have been actuated by the highest motives. But what we need in London, in addition to such representation, is an official with political and, if possible, diplomatic experience, who can keep his Government informed, through both official and informal relations with British ministers of state, with the current of events and the movement of British policy. There is no end to the dispatches arriving in Ottawa from the Foreign Office through the traditional circuitous route, which probably cover all the facts, but these are too frequently unintelligible without interpretation, and this could be supplied by a permanent and trained diplomatic official in London.

An endless number of suggestions have been made with regard to our representation in London. A resident minister has been proposed. That would be inadvisable to my mind chiefly by reason of the frequent changes which this type of appointment would entail. Permanence is highly important. An imperial secretariat is out of the question as being out of keeping with the independent status of the Dominions. The High Commissionership with ambassadorial status would serve the purpose with neither of these disadvantages.

These do not seem like very profound changes. They are not. No profound changes are necessary. What we require to make operative a union of sovereign states under one crown which is the British Commonwealth to-day is the maximum degree of intercommunication, the fullest transmission of knowledge and a continual interchange of views. We have clearly achieved the maximum degree of independence compatible with membership of a larger union. There is nothing more to get. Our international status is practically complete short of our repudiation of the crown. I have outlined the principal steps in our final advance. Added to these we have won the right of separate diplomatic representation in foreign capitals; and finally, the last great issue was settled when a Canadian minister, as the plenipotentiary of the King, signed a treaty alone without the counter-signature of the British Ambassador, (this right was, you will remember, finally ratified by the Imperial Conference of 1923). If there is conceivably any other step to be taken to give us complete freedom, we have only to ask for it. As the "Times" pointed out not long ago, in asking for further concessions, "we are knocking at an open door." And Canadian publicists who use obsolete phrases such as "the control from Downing Street," or the "subordination to British policy" are speaking not as political scientists but as antiquarians.

But although constitutional development has nothing further to offer us, nevertheless we, in Canada, apparently, have a decision to make. It remains to make a conscious choice between two alternatives. Either we accept the implications of the status which we have, half-unconsciously, received, or we reject the implications and the status too. We have for the last ten years quite rightly been

insisting upon the rights of Dominions. Now that they have been fully granted our attention might appropriately be directed to our obligations. Are they greater than we thought? An Australian writer in the *Quarterly Review* has said recently :

“The most conspicuous element in the whole episode has been the appetite for privilege and status, on the one hand, and the blindness, on the other, to the obligations and the responsibilities which that status implies.”

We can either make our voice heard as a member of the British Empire, Commonwealth, Alliance—call it what you will—and support a policy which we help to frame, or, fearing the consequences of this relationship disclaim all obligation, and abandon the status which we have won.

What are the consequences of this relationship? What are the risks involved? What about the wars which Great Britain—according to a recent speaker, “a militant and imperialistic power”—will inevitably involve us in? Well, without quibbling over these adjectives let us agree that Great Britain will be engaged, in the future as she has been in the past, in campaigns with which we have no concern. When the British Empire is in a state of war it does not follow that we must participate. There is abundant precedent for this before the Great War and after it, in those minor campaigns in Asia and Africa, in which we are not concerned.

But what about the major campaigns into which those minor campaigns sometimes grow? What about such a war as was threatened by the Turks at Chanak? In the first place, if the Dominions assert their rights, they can share in the policy that must precede such a war. I would venture to suggest that there is small chance of British statesmanship maintaining a policy in the face of Dominion opposition. As an English review put it not long ago, we are even asked by British statesmen “to blow fresh air into the corridors of Downing Street” and our fresh air provides a stronger gust than we know. Great Britain, as a matter of fact, is only half in Europe and is always ready, with the assistance of Dominion opinion, to think in terms of the new world rather than of continental politics. But let us suppose the worst—that Great Britain in the teeth of our protests is led into a cynical war over oil or cotton. In that event, presumably, our Parliament would declare its neutrality and the imperial experiment, for us, would be at an end. But let us cross that improbable bridge when we come to it.

As a matter of fact, we have learned that isolation in major wars is practically impossible in any event and the question is therefore more or less academic. Episodes like that at Chanak will confront us whether we are in the British Empire or not. But if isolation in war is impossible, is isolation in peace desirable? No nation or human institution of any kind, be it state or church or college, is worth its salt which does not believe in itself sufficiently to make itself felt in the world at large. In this there is a lesson for Canada. It is not preposterous to think that we have a role to play in international affairs, useful to ourselves and not unprofitable to the world. We have a point of view which we might well express in the world's councils. It is well to remember that true independence is an independence of mind. Moreover if we reject isolation as an unworthy alternative and continue to play our part in the world, it is well to remember that, in international affairs, whatever weight we have is due to the united force of the British Empire behind us. We are members of the League of Nations on our own footing, but apart from our status as a British nation our representatives would drop to the level of delegates from Lithuania or Ecuador. On the other hand, as members of the British Commonwealth, we, as Canadians, have a voice in the world's affairs out of all proportion to our numbers or our power. May I quote one example? At the Imperial Conference of 1921 the Canadian Prime Minister

made it . . . r the . . . as a nation, did not prove of a renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. In this we interpreted the general North American point of view. In so doing we incurred the displeasure of Australasia, but, through our insistence, the old military alliance between Great Britain and Japan was allowed to lapse, and the ground was cleared for the treaty signed at Washington a few months later which marks a definite step towards the stabilization of the world.

I have suggested the contribution which Canada can make to the world through its membership of the British Empire, provided our national will is asserted. The Empire of course can rest only on a basis of fully developed national entities. Each constituent nation must achieve its own unity before it can contribute to a larger unity. Nationality leads to Empire. In the case of Canada, the converse is also true. The Empire promotes nationality. Canadian nationality can only be built on a foundation of the British connection; without it we have but little unity. If one searches for an idea which is held in common by each of the provinces of this country one finds that the question cannot be answered by language, or race, or creed, or climate or occupation, but that Canadian unity is actually symbolized by the crown. Our only justification for existence is in our being an experiment in maintaining a British democracy in a North American environment. Canadian nationality without the unifying effect of active British connection is, for our lifetime at least impossible. It is a tradition that not only unifies the communities which compose this country but can counter the influences from across the border, powerful and numerous, that without our resistance will blot out all that distinguishes us from our neighbours and reduce us to a dead level of standardized uniformity. The true enemy of Canadian nationality has not been Downing Street for a generation or even two, it is "Main Street," the self-sufficient provincialism that seizes a people when it avoids the contact of the outside world and develops an ingrowing mind. We may well escape that devastating fate by the fortunate possession of a wider life.

I have suggested some of the reasons—material and otherwise—why we should consciously accept the standing within the British Empire which we have achieved. I have said but little of the moral issues. I confess that one has so often heard the Empire dealt with in terms of extravagant rhetoric that one is timid of what one says for fear of sentimentality. Reticence where we feel deepest is best. But with all its faults and lapses and occasional insincerities, as one looks abroad to-day and at the part which the British Empire is playing, one cannot escape the conclusion that this strange, misshapen, illogical, creaking old structure is the one agency which has an active sense of responsibility in the world at large, and is capable of giving effective application to those principles of international decency in which it believes. But the choice is not between the Empire and something else. There are few of us who want that "something else." The choice is rather that between, on the one hand, an isolation from the world—an isolation far from "splendid"—and, on the other, within the limits of our slender powers, the continued self-respecting discharge of our obligations. Is it untrue to hold that foreign affairs—our relations with the outside world—provide the top storey of the national edifice whose windows can give us both light and fresh air; and is it too idealistic, or too visionary to suggest that the real key after all to foreign policy above and beyond the good its wise direction can bring us, is the willingness to be of some service to the world?

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